



## **Antisocial Behaviour Investigation**

November 2019

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## **Appendices**

A: Desk top review

B: Resident survey

C: RBK ASB policy and procedures

D: Staff interviews

E: Interviews with other local authorities

F: Notes from discussion group

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\*These appendices are available upon request from Kelly Shirley, Policy, Service Development and Partnerships Officer, RBK Council.

## INTRODUCTION

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The Kingston Residents Scrutiny Panel, KRiSP is an autonomous Panel of council tenants and leaseholders set up by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Council in conjunction with the Kingston Federation of Residents. The role of KRiSP is to investigate and review the Council's housing services and to propose improvements that will be of benefit to all residents. KRiSP is central to the Council's 'Resident Involvement Framework' and has a commitment to co-regulation. It was formed in October 2013 and is currently composed of 10 tenants and leaseholders.

The role of KRiSP is to carry out service investigations and report on them to the Council. This is KRiSP's tenth investigation and the area of antisocial behaviour (ASB) was chosen.

The KRiSP Investigation Panel comprised Geof Yates (lead), Raewyn Hammond, David Miller, David West, Jackie Paddon, Monique Green, Mohamed Ali, Gill Willson, Mark Veitch and Siân Smith.

The Panel was supported by Kelly Shirley from the Council along with mentoring support from Phil Morgan. The KRiSP Investigation Panel would like to thank all the members of staff and residents who gave up their time freely to support this investigation.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main conclusions to this Report are that Kingston Council still have some way to go to achieving customer satisfaction when it comes to reporting and dealing with antisocial behaviour. KRiSP members felt that improvement in keeping residents informed of the progress of any investigation was vital and this in several cases did not happen leaving the resident despondent and disappointed. When looking at the results of the ASB Survey and the recently held Discussion Group Kingston Council is seriously falling short of residents' expectation and this is an area that needs to be addressed. It should be noted that there was only an 8.3% satisfaction recorded by the survey completed by Residents.

KRiSP also felt that using a spreadsheet to record and monitor antisocial behaviour incidents was possibly not the best reporting method. Perhaps the use of a more sophisticated suitable Case Management System would prove a useful tool, not only for the users but also for Management alike. This would enable them to monitor how incidents were progressing and to be able to gain useful KPIs to help ensure the process was working properly and meeting residents' expectations.

KRiSP were pleased to note that there was both a Policy and Procedures Document in place but felt that the Policy should be reviewed in view of a change in legislation regarding data protection which appears to have been overlooked. Otherwise it is well written and seems to cover all aspects of the topic, including the recording, management, and reporting back to residents of all reported incidents. The Panel also noted that (as far as we could tell) some staff were not aware of either the Policy or Procedures Document. Members of the Panel felt that with a brief review, it could be implemented straight away and should also be available on the website.

KRiSP were pleased to see that an Officer for antisocial behaviour was now in post and felt that this was a significant move forward. It was felt that the Council and the Met Police appear to have all the elements required to be able to have a well-functioning team to deal with antisocial behaviour, but it needs putting together with clarification on who to contact and for what area of antisocial behaviour which is not always clear and left residents confused.

There is also a lack of KPI's (key performance indicators) available and this also needs to be addressed not only recording the reported incidents but on successful outcomes with appropriate timescales.



## METHODOLOGY

### **The Panel agreed the following three objectives:**

1. To consider antisocial behaviour Policy and Procedures
2. To consider information and awareness of tenants and leaseholders of RBK's approach to tackling antisocial behaviour
3. To consider tenant and leaseholder experience of antisocial behaviour

This review covers both tenant and leaseholder experience of antisocial behaviour

### **The Panel carried out the following tasks:**

#### **Desktop Review which considered the following documents**

- RBK Policy and Procedures
- RBK Warning letters
- RBK Website
- RBK Housing Performance
- LB Wandsworth Policy and Procedures, Reporting and Monitoring
- PA Housing Policy, Website, Mediation and Noise App
- LB Westminster "Dear Neighbour" Card
- LB Sutton Website
- Respect ASB Charter
- ASB Costs through Housemark
- Community Triggers
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract example

#### **Staff Interviews:**

- Jane Mellard, Lead Officer; Landlord Services
- Tom Mann, Team Leader and Michael Murray-Rice, Team Leader, Contact Centre
- Robert Richmond, Lead Officer Leasehold Services
- Mark Cooper, Assistant Head of Law (South London legal Partnership)
- Stephanie Royston-Mitchell (SRM), Community Safety and Resilience Principal
- Claudia Cain, Resident Services Officer
- Fidelis Linehan, Manager, Housing Landlord Services Group,
- Charlie Aitken Antisocial Behaviour Officer

- Jamie Lombardi, Caretaker
- Wayne Carby, PCSO (Safer Neighbourhood Team) Berrylands Ward

### **Information from other Councils**

- Interview with Chris Shoubridge & Hameed Mohamed LB Hounslow
- Interview with Rhian Courtney-Butson, Tenancy Specialist of Clarion Housing

### **Resident engagement:**

- Survey of 135 residents by email – even split of tenants and leaseholders
- Group discussion with five residents, four leaseholders and one tenant



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Below is the complete list of recommendations which have been made following the Panel's investigation. The reasons for these recommendations and findings behind these are detailed in the *Findings and Recommendations* section of this report.

1. That there should be a brief review of policy and procedures, including the areas identified in this report, and these should be made available to all staff working on ASB and to residents including through the website. (Ref policy and procedures findings 1-13).
  2. That the proposed ASB Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) information sheet be completed, discussed with the police, and disseminated widely to all staff working on ASB and residents including through the RBK website. (Ref Handling of ASB findings 14-22).
  3. That KPIs for ASB be prepared, recorded, monitored and reported to residents covering both quality of service, resident experience and performance reporting. (Ref Resident experience findings 23-29).
  4. That the current approach to case management be reviewed with emphasis on case handling, contact with residents and escalation. (Ref case handling findings 30-32).
  5. That there should be clear guidance on handling of noise reports, including the role of Environmental Health. (Ref Noise findings 33-37).
  6. That the Council consider the use of sound monitoring equipment or a phone app. (Ref Noise findings 33-37).
  7. That the Council review the implementation of its procedures for ASB involving vulnerable residents in conjunction with other agencies. (Ref Vulnerable residents findings 38-44).
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## FINDINGS

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### Policy

1. There are policy and procedures in place dated 2017. These were to be reviewed annually although there appear to be no plans to do so.
2. There is no procedure for reviewing policies on a rolling basis.
3. The procedures are very thorough and confirmed by Legal as up to date from their perspective.
4. There are out-dated references to Data Protection, which would now need to be GDPR compliant.
5. There are also some new documents referred to by the Lead Officer; Landlord Services that the policy does not mention.
6. Some members of staff, who would work on ASB as part of their role, are not aware of the Policy or Procedures.
7. The Policy is not on the RBK website.
8. Other landlords have an ASB policy in place and Hounslow, who are currently reviewing their policy and procedures, are happy to share their versions with RBK.
9. RBK, like other landlords, have access to a Legal team who advise on serious cases.

### Website

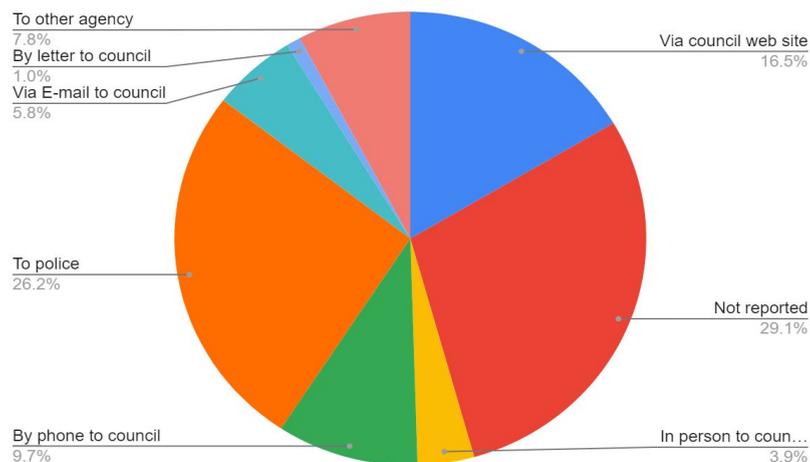
10. It is unclear how the RBK website on-line reporting systems works in practice.
11. Senior staff say that the on-line reporting system is not fit for purpose.
12. The on-line reporting system muddles up ASB and crime reporting.
13. Other landlord websites viewed include definition, reporting and an interactive toolkit for signposting.

### Handling of ASB cases

14. The current procedure grades ASB cases.

15. The intention is that the RSOs deal with less serious cases, and the antisocial Behaviour Officer with more serious cases.
16. Other landlords also grade ASB into less and more serious cases.
17. In practice staff are not always clear about their roles and how best to handle situations. This includes Contact Centre staff where training and/or information and/or visit by the antisocial Behaviour Officer was identified as helpful to their role. The lead Leasehold Officer actively encourages leaseholders to contact him directly and not to go through the Contact Centre.
18. 91% of survey respondents say they understand the difference between ASB and Crime although in practice they report ASB quite widely. 29% of respondents do not report ASB, 26% report it to the Police, 37% report it to the Council and 8% to other agencies.

**As a victim, how did you report the complaint? (Tick all that may apply)**



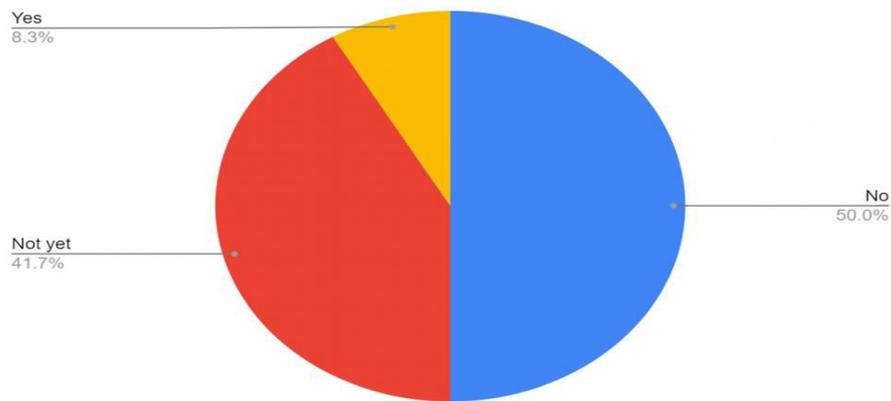
**Notes:** 75 responses, grouped into 8 types

19. Legal services have cautioned against defining ASB and crime too strictly.
20. The Antisocial Behaviour Officer is currently preparing a 'frequently asked questions' information sheet, which will help staff and residents with resolving confusion. Previous ASB information was described by senior staff as "not fit for purpose".
21. This sheet will also raise points about the respective roles of the Council and police which the Antisocial Behaviour Officer is well placed to address and agree a joint approach.
22. Staff are unclear about whether there is a difference between crime and ASB. The PCSO interviewed agreed that the crossover between the police and Council can be confusing.

## Resident Experience

23. Resident experience of ASB is poor. The chart below, from the resident survey, shows only 8.3% were satisfied with the outcome of their case.

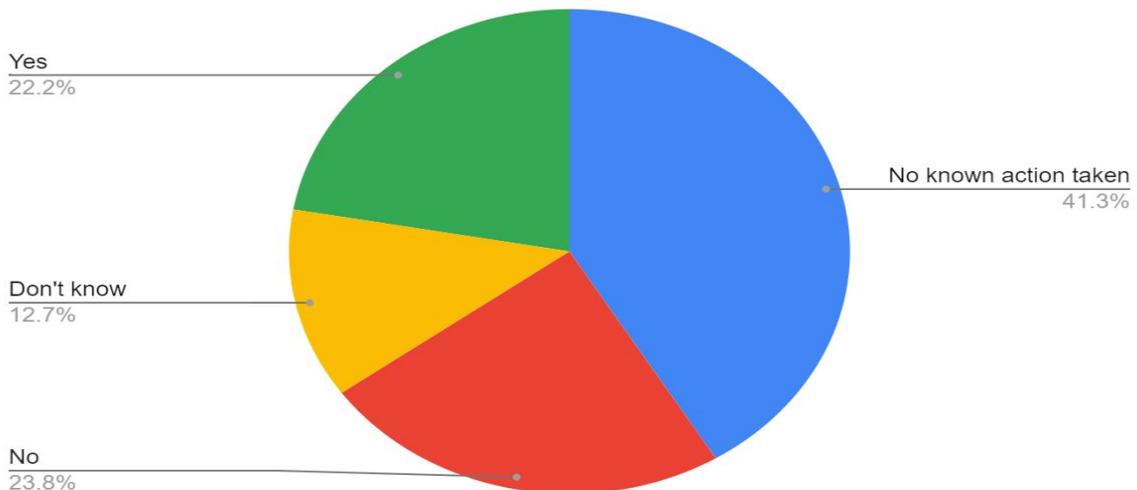
Count of Was the outcome satisfactory?



24. Other results from the survey show the following:

- a) 65% were not given information on what would happen next, or reported no known action taken

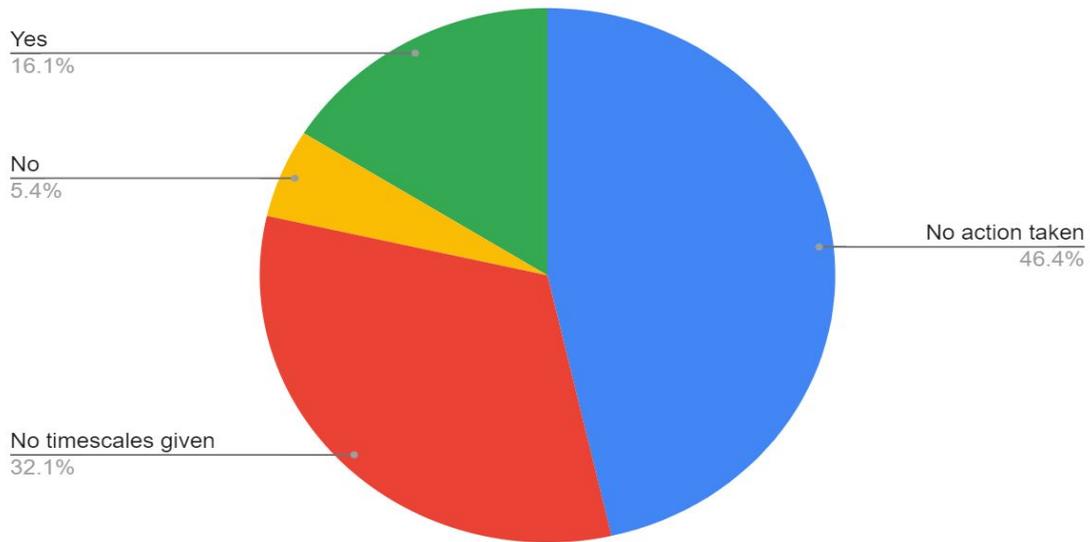
Count of As a victim or alleged perpetrator were you given information on what would happen next and the timescales?



**Notes:** 63 responses

- b) 77% reported that either no action was taken, or that no timescales were given.

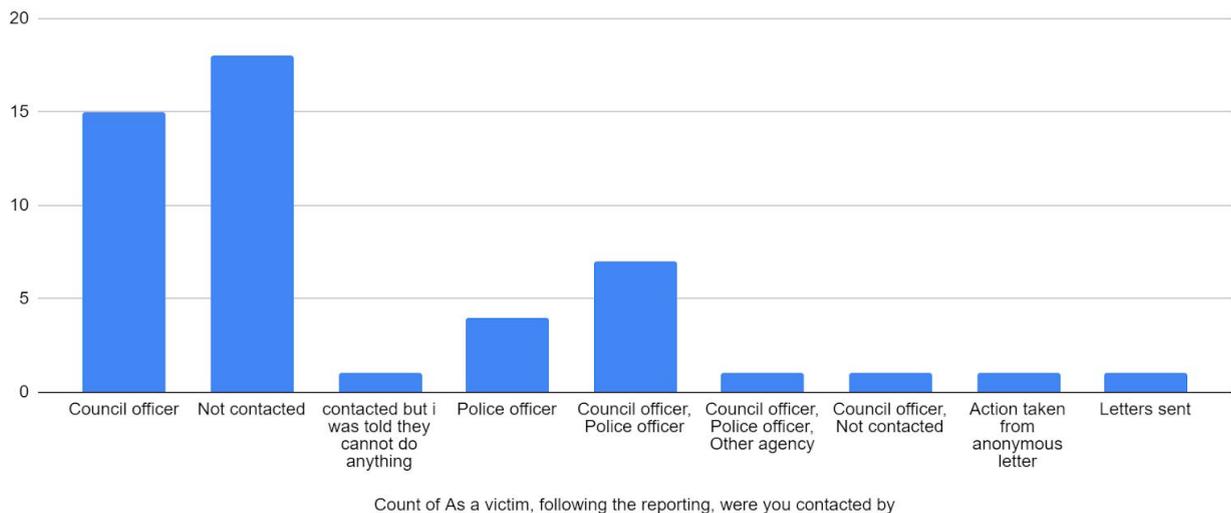
Count of Was action taken within the timescales set out?



**Notes:** 64 responses

- c) 37% did not receive any contact from the Council

Count of As a victim, following the reporting, were you contacted by



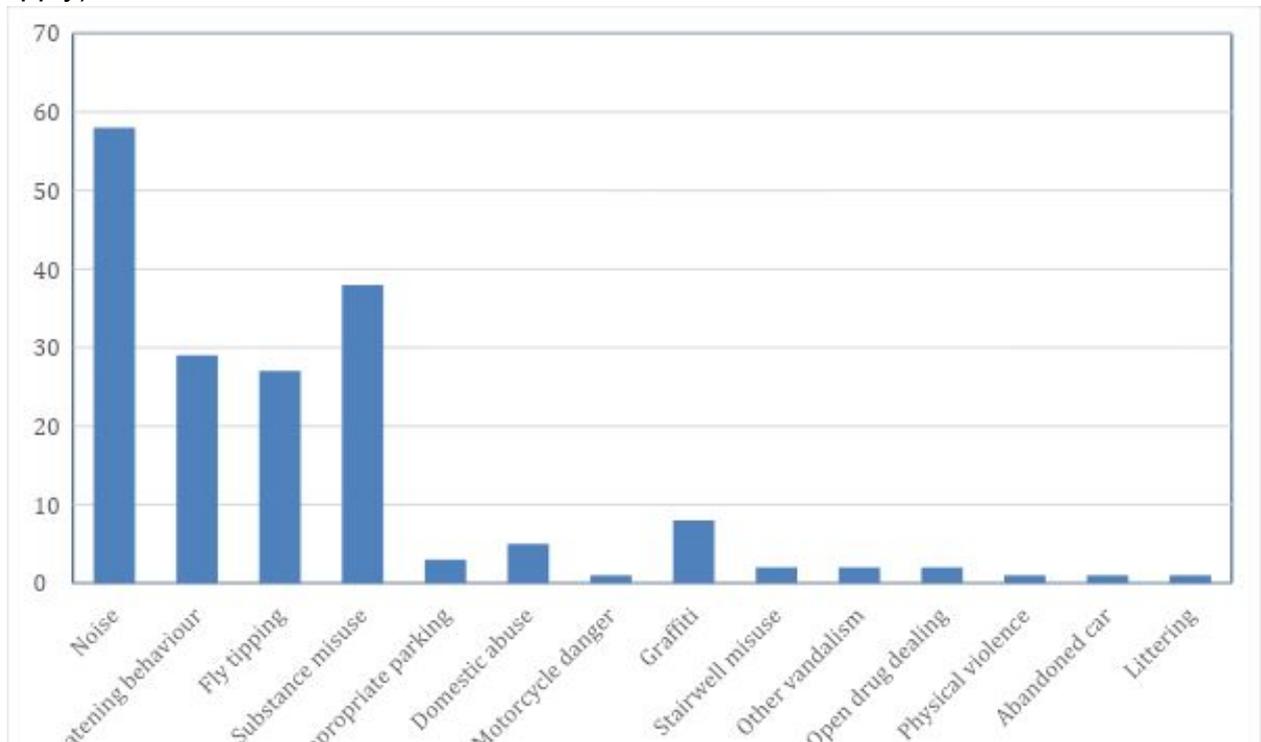
**Notes:** 49 responses

- d) Top two reasons for not reporting ASB were that ‘there was no point’ or ‘did not know how to report ASB’.
  - e) Comments highlighted that residents believed that the Council does nothing about ASB.
25. The Discussion Group also suggested concerns about the lack of response by the Council to ASB reports, and that there was a reasonable expectation from residents that there should be a response.
  26. The Panel notes that the survey, and Discussion Group, are self-selecting, and may include a higher proportion of residents dissatisfied with the ASB process. However the Council appears to have no figures capturing any feedback from residents.
  27. Other landlords do have KPIs in place capturing areas such as satisfaction with ASB handling, satisfaction with ASB outcomes and cases closed. They also report on outcomes and satisfaction to residents.
  28. It was noted that there is no KPI for ASB proposed by RBK as part of the current review of KPIs.
  29. There is Housemark benchmarking of ASB costs that show slightly higher than average costs for RBK, except for direct costs per case, which appear excessively high.

## Case Management

- 30. Currently staff use a restricted access excel spreadsheet to log and update progress with ASB reports. There was an issue previously with a member of staff leaving and information being lost.
- 31. This area, more than any other, was identified as a weakness by staff with most experience of dealing with ASB in RBK. It was suggested that there should be a Case Management System in place. One example was the Air Space system used by the police.
- 32. Such a system would have multiple advantages – it would allow for proper recording and updating of cases. It would also support confirmation of timelines and updates to residents. In addition, it would be able to escalate cases where no action had been taken and it would allow for reporting of performance.

Describe the type of behaviour you have experienced/been involved in (tick all that apply)



**Notes:** 80 responses

## Noise

33. Noise was the most important ASB issue for residents. The survey showed 71% of residents had experienced noise nuisance and the discussion group identified this as the most mentioned issue.
34. Both the Antisocial Behaviour Officer and the Lead Officer Leasehold Services identified this as the main issue.
35. It was not clear to the Panel how the respective roles of Environmental Health, RSOs, Antisocial Behaviour Officer and the Lead Officer Leasehold Services worked together in practice.
36. The Panel noted that PA Housing had a Noise App, and that Clarion had sound monitoring equipment.
37. Staff identified that it would be helpful to have access to noise monitoring equipment.

## Vulnerable residents

38. There was feedback from the Antisocial Behaviour Officer that access to mental health services would be welcome.
39. There was also feedback from staff about a lack of knowledge regarding systems for early intervention where mental health was possibly an issue.
40. The Panel noted that both victims and perpetrators of ASB may be vulnerable.
41. Other landlords also noted mental health was an issue with interventions not always being about legal proceedings or eviction.
42. The current procedures detail what should happen in such cases, although it is not clear that this is happening in practice.
43. It is not clear whether the current partnership working arrangements fully address issues around vulnerability or safeguarding.
44. There was also feedback that ASB incidents were largely down to the 'usual suspects'.

## Other

45. The Panel received some useful positive feedback about the Lead Officer Landlord Services and the Antisocial Behaviour Officer.

46. There is use of mediation, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and the availability of the 'Community Trigger' process.
47. The Discussion Group saw ASB as the joint responsibility of the Council, police and residents with a wide range of people taking responsibility.
48. There are partnership arrangements in place although there was feedback that there should be better liaison.
49. Other councils are looking to sharply increase their use of CCTV.

## CONCLUSION

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Noise appeared to be a significant issue and KRiSP would suggest that perhaps the Council would consider having some sort of measuring device available for residents who are experiencing this sort of antisocial Behaviour. Also some clarity is needed for both staff and residents as to whether this type of issue is dealt with by the Council or Environmental Health.

KRiSP also had some concern regarding antisocial behaviour issues involving vulnerable residents and felt that the implementation of the Council's ASB procedures on vulnerable residents should be reviewed.

Residents attending the discussion group and an Estate Caretaker raised issues around CCTV coverage on their Housing Estates, the suggestion being that coverage was inadequate and cameras appear not to be functioning. KRiSP realise this is a borough wide issue and does not fall under housing management so it is not included in our recommendations.

KRiSP would like to thank the ongoing work of the Housing Management Team in making staff more aware of KRiSPs remit and offering support where needed. We appreciate that they are extremely busy at present but the time taken to improve staff perception of KRiSP has been greatly appreciated.

Last but not least KRiSP would like to thank the residents who took time to complete our survey together with those who participated in our Discussion Group (based on how a Focus Group would be operated). These contributions from residents greatly improved our understanding of the experiences of those subjected to antisocial Behaviour and provided us with the confirmatory evidence that underlines some of our Recommendations.

This time around KRiSP numbers had increased by four new members and their help with this report has been invaluable.

## LEARNING

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The Panel were told that there is no procedure for reviewing policies on a rolling basis. The Panel will reflect on this for future reviews.

In view of the success of the recently held Discussion Group for this investigation it was felt that KRiSP, should we do this again, needed to include the date of the event in the Survey sent out to residents and also have a provision for those completing the survey to say whether they are prepared to attend.